

VZCZCXRO8520
RR RUEHIK RUEHPOD RUEHPW RUEHYG
DE RUEHBUL #1459 1650937
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 130937Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4365
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS KABUL 001459

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR WOOD
OSD FOR WILKES
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-101 POLAD

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: BADGHIS PROVINCE: DIFFICULT WEATHER CONDITIONS AFFECT
ECONOMY AS GOVERNMENT TRIES TO MAINTAIN SECURITY

¶1. Summary: The combination of the past winter's record-cold temperatures and the current drought has dominated governance activities and will have profound implications for Badghis's agriculture-based economy. Badghis's economic infrastructure remains primitive. The provincial security situation is in flux, but the insurgency shows signs of splitting.

Security: Weakening Insurgency

¶2. Insurgents were expected to launch an aggressive spring offensive this year, but the worst predictions did not come to pass. While insurgents can still gather in large numbers and have freedom of movement in Bala Murghab and Ghormach districts, fault lines within the insurgency appear to have developed following the February arrest of Mullah Destagir, the number two and rumored ideological leader of the Badghis insurgency. His arrest has shaken the insurgents' leadership structure and has created an environment of distrust and suspicion within it. The leader of the Badghis insurgency, Mullah Haqqani, was wounded in a shootout with another Badghis insurgent group.

¶3. The performance of the Afghan National Police (ANP) remains mixed. While there has been a noticeable improvement in provincial leadership with the arrival of Deputy ANP Commander Waheed, much work remains in the fields of discipline and training.

Development: Increased Donor Support

¶4. Basic economic infrastructure in Badghis remains primitive. There are no paved roads in the entire province, and Ring Road construction stops at the Badghis border. Electricity is limited to the towns of Qal-e-Now and Jawand. The largest international donor to the province remains the Spanish PRT, which annually contributes USD 20 million in funds for infrastructure projects such as road construction and water projects. The Government of Norway, through PRT Maymana, has funded the French NGO ACTED with USD 4.5 million specifically for projects in the insecure district of Ghormach. USAID is strengthening its presence in Badghis with their Local Governance Community Development Program.

Governance: Improvements in Disaster Relief

¶5. Much of Badghis's governance activities have been limited to responding to this winter's severe weather and the current drought. Snow and freezing temperatures combined to kill more than 220 people and left tens of thousands of livestock dead. After a slow start, the performance of the province's Combined Disaster Management Team improved. While still heavily dependent on international community

assistance, the response to the winter crisis was better organized with less corruption than efforts in previous years (provincial officials sold food aid rather than distribute it in previous years). As the effects of the drought become more evident - meat prices have already dropped by a third as farmers slaughter their livestock and sell the meat before the herds die in the fields - the generally weak line ministries will be hard-pressed to deal with the long-term problems such as large-scale unemployment, internally displaced persons, and disputes over scarce resources.

¶6. Governor Naseri is spending increasing amounts of time in Kabul. Although he actively seeks funds and development projects from both the GIROA and the international community, his lack of presence in Qal-e Now is noticeable. The Provincial Council (PC) remains plagued by high absenteeism and a generally low activity level.

¶7. In Ghormach, UNAMA and RC North-PRT Maymana meet regularly with the 69-member tribal shura that was formed following a November 2007 RC North operation. In June 2008, members of the shura signed a document committing to creating the security environment necessary for development. Whether this document will affect insurgent activities in Ghormach is still unclear.

DELL